



News Release from Congressman  
**ROB SIMMONS**

SECOND DISTRICT, CONNECTICUT

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CONTACT: JOHN GOODWIN  
202/812-1341

## **SIMMONS DECRIES SLOW EVACUATION PLANS FOR AMERICANS IN MIDDLE EAST**

*Lawmaker Presses State Department To Act More Swiftly; Rejects Call For Reimbursement*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Rep. Rob Simmons, R-2nd District, today called on the U.S. Government to act more swiftly in evacuating Americans from Lebanon. Simmons contacted the U.S. Department of State this afternoon on behalf of those eastern Connecticut families with loved ones in the Middle East to express his concern.

“It’s outrageous to learn that U.S. citizens are still waiting to be evacuated in Lebanon,” Simmons said. “Information on evacuation plans for those Americans in the Middle East is slow, contradictory and sometimes non-existent. While other nations are evacuating their countrymen by the thousands, our citizens sit and wait for answers. It’s unacceptable.”

The Department of State announced Monday that the government is beginning to move, with a 750-passenger ship and some helicopters arriving today to begin removing some Americans. But according to press reports, by late Monday only 64 Americans had left Lebanon, while countries like France and Italy had already loaded ships bound for home.

Today, Simmons today called the U.S. Dept. of State and spoke with Mideast Specialist Ms. Rachel Ingher. Ms. Ingher said that one 750-person passenger ship – the “Orient Queen” – has arrived in Lebanon. The 1400-person ship “Senchak” is scheduled to also arrive any day now. Citizens wishing to leave Lebanon via the Orient Queen or Senchak should call 1-202-501-4444 for more information.

Simmons also expressed his opposition to reports that Americans will have to reimburse the government for the costs associated with leaving the war-torn region. “That’s not happening,” Simmons flatly said, adding that he fully expected Congress to waive the 1950-era law requiring repayment.

Simmons concluded, “Many of my constituents are frustrated with U.S. efforts, and rightfully so. Many of the details of the evacuation still remain unknown to those who wish to leave. What’s the order of the evacuation? What can they bring? What time will they depart? While it is reassuring that ships are on the way to the region, our government must do better in getting important information to those Americans who need it.”

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